

News

BBNC Urges Legislature To Review And Update Alaska Laws Protecting Salmon And Salmon Habitat

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The Alaska legislature has not updated the state's anadromous fish habitat protection laws (Title 16) since statehood. Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) understands there are ongoing and parallel efforts both in the legislature and through other public processes to revise these laws. Without choosing sides regarding the merit of these efforts, BBNC agrees it is time to review and update Title 16. During the coming year, BBNC will work with the Walker administration, the legislature and other stakeholders to identify improvements to these statutes and collaboratively make appropriate updates so that salmon and salmon habitat are better protected but responsible resource development is not unduly hampered.

BBNC's positions on Title 16 and other resource issues are grounded in our belief that decisions about how Alaska balances the uses of competing resources should always put "Fish First". Nowhere is this more true than in Bristol Bay which is home to the world's greatest remaining wild sockeye salmon fisheries. This past year, more than 60 million sockeye returned to Bristol Bay. These fish rear in the region's headwaters and their harvest this past summer supported thousands of jobs, millions in wages, and billions in total economic output. These salmon also provide subsistence for

Nushagak and Kvichak river systems. Despite the fact that the Pebble Limited Partnership (PLP) has now proposed a smaller mine footprint, our Directors and shareholders still believe it is the wrong mine in the wrong place.

BBNC also believes that responsible resource development can and should take place in Bristol Bay and throughout Alaska. To BBNC, responsible resource development entails projects that align with local opinion and do not threaten fisheries and fish habitat. The protections in Title 16 help ensure that development projects do not threaten Alaska's anadromous fisheries. It is imperative that Alaska periodically review and update those statutes. This has not been done in nearly 60 years. It is time for the state legislature to do so.

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